

**INSIDE:**

+ **Interesting Mothers  
from the Bible**



A Publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance  
May 2022





ONE is the official publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance (ECMA) which guides its mission, content, and theme. The ECMA encourage submissions from ECMA congregations. Photographs, stories, testimonies, and other submissions should be directed toward your church leaders or sent via email to [one@ourecma.com](mailto:one@ourecma.com).

**Advisory Board**  
Anna Towns

**Editor**  
Linn Ann Huntington  
[lhunting@fhsu.edu](mailto:lhunting@fhsu.edu)

The ECMA ONE Advisory Board will choose appropriate and timely submissions for publication. The columns in ONE represent the views of the author.

Volume 16, Issue 2 • [ourecma.com](http://ourecma.com) • Copyright 2022 individual authors and ECMA

### **Editor's Note:**

With Mother's Day coming up on May 8, we asked our writers to select a mother from the Bible that they find interesting. We asked them to tell us why this woman's story resonates with them and what we can all learn from her.

## ***A Gentile Mother's Plea to Jesus Still Teaches Humility***

**Written by:**

**Brandon Nimz**

Though lessons can be learned from many mothers in scripture, I find one of the most inspiring mothers in the Bible actually has no given name.

In Mark 7:24-30 (NIV) we read her account: "Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

"First let the children eat all they want," He told her, "for

*it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.'*

*"Lord,' she replied, 'even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.'*

*"Then He told her, 'For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.' "She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone."*

Lest there be any confusion here, Jesus was using an analogy. He wasn't really talking about actual dogs. He was saying to the woman that there were many Jewish children in need, so why should she expect Him to help her daughter, who was a Gentile. He was challenging her to tell Him why she felt her child was deserving of a miracle.

Though we are not told all of the motivations of the woman, it seems that her care for her daughter drove her to find Jesus and to humbly fall at His feet. After that, Jesus using the term "dogs" could have caused her pride to get in the way of her request. Instead, she went along with His words. Not only did the mother not fight Him on His words, she even expanded the analogy using His own imagery in an effort to help her daughter. This showed a powerful love for her daughter, perseverance, humility, and faith in Christ's ability to help her child.

In fact, the method she used of not fighting the intention of the other party/ letting the other party's words stand, but also adding to them or turning them, is something Jesus Himself did multiple times in scripture. In

## ***A Gentile Mother's Plea to Jesus (Continued)***

John 8, the Pharisees and teachers of religious law brought a woman to Jesus caught in the act of adultery and asked Him what should be done. They pointed out the law of Moses called for her to be stoned and likely hoped that Jesus would fight against them on this so they could have Him arrested.

Not only did Jesus not fight their statement, He even went along with them and told them that they could punish her, but added *"any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her"* (John 8:7). This subtle addition made it impossible for them to continue and highlighted a part of their own hearts that needed changing.

In Mark 11 the chief priests and teachers of religious law asked Jesus by whose authority He was acting. Again, He did not fight their

question or intention, but said He would answer them IF they answered a question of His. His follow-up question was one that they could not answer without revealing their hearts to the people, so it left Jesus free to continue to act.

This powerful peacemaking principle that Jesus used was certainly not something that the disciples who walked with Him all the time grasped early on. In Luke 9, when Jesus was headed towards Jerusalem and a Samaritan village would not receive Him, the disciples did not respond peacefully. Instead, they asked if they could call down fire upon the village, leading Jesus to rebuke them.

Yet this unnamed pagan mother, who had not walked with Jesus, was able to demonstrate such a profound peacemaking principle

immediately to help her daughter. No wonder Jesus chose to challenge her and let her answer occur and shine. This was a humbling lesson not only for the disciples who were present (and who likely would have looked down a little on this mother since she was a woman and non-Jewish), but it is also a humbling lesson for us and for others who would read scripture in the future. To be able to answer the way she did requires a deeply embodied humility, love, and perseverance. I still find it to be a challenging example to live up to, and I hope it is an excellent inspiration for all of us this Mother's Day.



*Brandon Nimz is the Director of Unite Ministry in Hays.*

### ***Each of Us Can Be an Important Part of a Child's Life***

***Written by:***  
***Kathy Dinkel***

Of the many mothers of determination, courage, and faith in the Bible, my favorite is Moses' mother, Jochebed. Moses was born when the Pharaoh of Egypt had ordered all male Hebrew babies to be thrown into the

Nile River. Jochebed, showing tremendous determination and courage, hid Moses from the authorities for three months and eventually floated him down the Nile in a watertight basket-, displaying incredible faith. Moses's sister Miriam followed him down the river, and when Pharaoh's daughter found him, Miriam

offered Jochebed's assistance in raising the child (Exodus 1:15-2:10).

Moses would grow up to become the man that God used to end the slavery of the Israelites and lead them out of Egypt. God used Jochebed's deeply human desire to protect her baby's

## ***Each of Us Can Be an Important Part (Continued)***

life to shape the course of history. But I want to reflect on something of a slightly less cosmic scale-- her acceptance of help from the God-given team around her.

I believe as mothers and grandmothers, we need to exercise our faith, courage, and determination when raising our families, but we also need to learn to release and trust like Jochebed.

Without Jochebed's determination, courage, and faith, Moses would have died before his story ever started, yet Jochebed wasn't the only actor in this story. Two midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, helped protect Moses--enabling Jochebed to keep him hidden. Once Jochebed released Moses into the river, her daughter Miriam followed the basket until Pharaoh's daughter discovered it. Miriam was vital to God's plan in bringing Moses back to Jochebed under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter. Even Pharaoh's daughter was part of God's plan for raising Moses into the man that God

needed him to be.

This story didn't simply happen. God was fully involved, and this was not just a string of coincidences. God heard and felt the cry of Jochebed's heart for her boy, and I believe that God will do great wonders for mothers today who seek to raise their children with faith, courage, and determination.

Is there anything more powerful than the heartfelt prayers of a believing mother or grandmother? The reality in Jochebed's life was that the future generations of her people were at stake, and the future generations of our current nation also have a fierce (and tricky) enemy.

We hear a lot about abortion, teen suicide, drug abuse, etc., but some of our enemies are more subtle and closer to home. One is the attitude that children are a bother and an inconvenience. Because of this, many young adults are choosing not to have children or to remain single. These may seem to be harmless choices, but when these attitudes spread, it can

diminish an entire generation right before our eyes.

Children are seeds of promise for tomorrow and need to be protected and nurtured. Yet raising children in today's society is difficult. As in Jochebed's story, there were many actors bringing about the desired end result. Which part do you play in helping the children in your life?

In today's society the "actors" may look more like trustworthy God-given daycare workers, teachers, coaches, youth leaders, and Sunday School teachers--to name a few. But any could be the important puzzle piece to a child's successful future.

Stay alert, full of faith, courage and determination. You never know when God may be calling you to be part of a child's amazing story.



*Kathy Dinkel is a member of Liberty Foursquare Church in Hays.*



**“ONLY GOD HIMSELF FULLY APPRECIATES THE INFLUENCE OF A CHRISTIAN MOTHER IN THE MOLDING OF CHARACTER IN HER CHILDREN.” - BILLY GRAHAM**

## ***Elizabeth Proves God Can Bring Newness of Life at Any Age***

**Written by:**

**Cheryl Glassman**

*"My God is an oath; my God is abundance."* I am sure these words were hard for Elizabeth to understand-- words that are the meaning of her name. When I was thinking of the women in the Bible, the name Elizabeth came immediately to mind.

Elizabeth was the name of both my maternal and paternal (Pauline Elizabeth) grandmothers. Elizabeth was my Confirmation name. There isn't a lot written about Elizabeth in the bible. She is only mentioned in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke. However, Elizabeth is as important a woman as all the others mentioned in the Bible. She was entrusted by God to be the mother of John the Baptist, who told--or prepared the way--for the coming of the Messiah.

Elizabeth and her husband Zacharias were Levites. Levites had special responsibilities. They were called to teach, and as it states in Malachi 2:7, *"For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."* We also hear in Luke

1:6-7 that the couple was *"righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years."*

It must have been such a difficult thing to not be able to conceive. Being such faith-filled people, they must have wondered what God had in store for them. In those days, wives were supposed to bear children, especially a son. Elizabeth must have endured emotional pain, and we all know there are those who will "talk" about such situations, which makes it worse.

However, Elizabeth waited. She believed. She had faith. She must have known that God has his reasons, but I cannot imagine how difficult a time it must have been.

The statement "in God's time" comes to mind. Sometimes, we think we know when something should happen or if something should happen at all. When it does not occur as we thought, we either get angry, dismiss it, or we think someone involved must have done something wrong to deserve not getting what we think should have

happened. We don't think about things "in God's time." That's where, in the case of Elizabeth, God, and the Virgin Mary come in.

Mary and Elizabeth both were descended from the 12 tribes of Israel--Mary from the tribe of Judah and Elizabeth from the tribe of Levi ("daughter of" Aaron). This would more than likely make Mary and Elizabeth cousins. When Mary visited her "cousin" Elizabeth, as recorded in Luke 1:41-42, something remarkable happened. Elizabeth was six months pregnant at the time. This moment in Luke's Gospel has always been so wonderful to me. Here is Elizabeth, an old woman (probably my age or even older), and she greets Mary with such grace and humility. Instead of saying "Hey! Look! Can you believe it?" about her own pregnancy, she is overwhelmed as her son John leaps in her womb, announcing to Elizabeth that Mary is pregnant with Jesus.

What makes it even more profound for me personally is that I portrayed Elizabeth in a re-enactment once. I memorized the words of Elizabeth from Luke's Gospel. I had on a veil and clothing from the time period. I waited

## ***Elizabeth Proves God Can Bring Newness (Continued)***

in the sacristy at church while the person reading the Gospel spoke of Mary traveling to see Elizabeth.

While I waited, butterflies filled my stomach. I listened to the words of the Gospel telling about Mary's travels. When it was time, I stepped out of the sacristy; I spoke the words Elizabeth spoke, "But who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby

leapt in my womb for joy."

At the end of the reading, I went back in the sacristy, and the tears came. I thought of Elizabeth's life and how she could have turned away from God, but she didn't. She believed and was steadfast. There are times we all are tempted to turn away when we are waiting. But as I have seen, and continue to see, God can bring newness to any and all people, regardless of their age. He sees all, knows

all, and hears all. He has a purpose for everything and, if we listen, wait, hope, pray, and believe, He will make our purpose known. As it says in Psalm 138:8, "*The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.*"



*Cheryl Glassman is the Minister of Music at St. Nicolas of Myra Catholic Church in Hays.*

## ***The Woman at the Well Simply Shares Her Faith***

**Written by:**  
**Rev. Shay Craig**

In John's gospel Jesus encounters a woman by a well (John 4:4-3, 39-42). This woman has a storied past. She has had five husbands and is currently residing with a sixth man who is not her husband. Some interpreters have speculated that this means that she has loose morals. A kinder and, therefore, more Christian reading would be that life has been very hard on this woman. In the 1st Century, a woman who was not married

was subject to severe social and economic vulnerability. No woman would willingly subject herself to the privations and dangers of that condition unless she were in dire circumstances.

If this woman were widowed, or had to leave a marriage, we must presume that it was because she had no other recourse. So rather than speculate about her character, I choose to believe that she is a woman for whom life has been particularly hard. This is why her exchange with Jesus is so moving.

She meets this man at a well and engages in conversation with him. This is already astonishing because she is not chaperoned, and such a meeting is scandalous. Further, he is Jewish, and she is Samaritan, and they do not mix. And yet, when he asks her for water, she engages in conversation with him. She has learned to be compassionate, but direct. The man tells her, in so many words, that he is the Messiah for whom her people have been waiting.

She is, understandably, skeptical. She has seen

## ***The Woman at the Well Simply Shares Her Faith (Continued)***

enough of life to know that what seems too good to be true often is. And yet, something in her still holds out hope. Despite all that the world has taught her, she clings to a glimmer of faith in God's promises for her people. This woman, who has been ground down by the boot heel of her culture, retains a deep and abiding faith.

*"I know that the Messiah is coming (who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things."*

Convinced by his words, she goes into town and relates what she has seen. *"Come, see a Man who told me all the things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" They went out of the city and came to Him."*

Now this is an unescorted, disrespected, working woman. She has no social currency, no credibility to build on. But what she does have is the courage of her convictions, the strength of her faith in the Messiah, and the fearlessness of one who knows he is speaking God's

truth.

The result is that the townspeople go out to see this Jesus. And, upon seeing him and watching and listening to him, they are convicted.

*"So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to remain with them. And He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His word."*

*"They said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this Man is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.'"*

This woman spoke the truth of her faith in Jesus, and through those words, brought others to see with their own eyes, to experience their own conversion. She did not force them; she did not intimidate or coerce them. She simply said, "Come and see" and let Jesus gather the souls into his flock.

Few of us can say that our lives have been easy. Few can stand the scrutiny of a judgmental society, in the 1st

Century or the 21st Century. And yet, how many of us have the strength to engage with Jesus, argue with God? And how many have the courage to stand up in the marketplace and say, "I believe! Come and see!"

The woman at the well is strong, and she courageous, and that is enough for me to admire her. But the final star in her crown is her faith. She knows that is it not her job to "bring people to Jesus." It is just her job to live her faith, speak her truth, love God and her neighbor, and her words and actions will point the way.

This text reminds us that it does not matter who we are or what we have been through. God loves us. God seeks to be in relationship with each of us. And God will speak through us to the world, if we are courageous, strong and have faith. God will do the rest.



*The Rev. Shay Craig is Vicar of St. Andrew's and St. Michael's Episcopal Churches in Hays.*